

declare his determination respecting those bases, in order that insurmountable difficulties might not arrest the negotiations at their very outset. The Duke of Vicenza (Caulaincourt), who had just succeeded the Due de Bassano, received this letter. Trusting to the declaration of Frankfort he thought he would be justified in treating on those bases ; he confidently relied on the consent of Napoleon. But the Allies had now determined not to grant the limits accorded by that declaration. Caulaincourt was therefore obliged to apply for fresh powers, which being granted, he replied, on the 2d of December, that Napoleon accepted the fundamental and summary bases which had been communicated by M. de St. Aignan. To this letter M. Metternich answered that the Emperors of Russia and Austria were gratified to find that the Emperor of France recognized the bases judged necessary by the Allies; that the two sovereigns would communicate without delay the official document to their Allies, and that they were convinced that immediately on receiving their reply the negotiations might be opened without any interruption of the war.

We shall now see the reason why these first negotiations came to no result. In the month of October the Allies overthrew the colossal edifice denominated the French Empire. When led by victory to the banks of the Rhine they declared their wish to abstain from conquest, explained their intentions, and manifested an unalterable resolution to abide by them. This determination of the Allies induced the French Government to evince pacific intentions. Napoleon wished, by an apparent desire for peace, to justify, if I may so express myself, in the eyes of his subjects, the necessity of new sacrifices ; which, according to his proclamations, he demanded only to enable him to obtain peace on as honorable conditions as possible. But the truth is, he was resolved not even to listen to the offers made at Frankfort. He always represented the limits of the Rhine as merely a compensation for the dismemberment of Poland and the immense aggrandizement of the English possessions in Asia. But he wanted to gain time, and, if possible, to keep the Allied armies on the right

bank of the Rhine.